1: Hollis G-5 (ca. 1894-1904) 1905
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PREFACE

Some years ago this body conceived the idea of educating at their central station at Freretown, near Mombasa, a few of the most promising of their up-country converts. When sufficiently advanced, these boys or men are sent back to their homes and become teachers of the Gospel. Thus, one Ol-omeni[1], a member of the Oikop or Lumbwa Masai, who had spent some years under the able tuition of the Rev. A. R. Steggall at Taveta, was baptized under the name of Justin, and completed his education at the coast. He is now one of the principal supports of the Society in Southern Masailand. To the kindness of the Society in lending me Justin Ol-omeni's services, and to the diligence of Justin Ol-omeni himself, I am in a large measure indebted for the material contained in this book. Philologists will possibly be interested to hear that there exist Masai (and possibly members of other tribes whose language has ever been a closed book) who are able to correspond with one another in their mother tongue. I have in my possession, for instance, several letters written in Masai.

As a well-wisher of the Masai and one who has known them for a decade, I consider that every support should be given to the Church Missionary Society and to the other Missions engaged in proselytizing in their midst, for it is only by the gradual and peaceful civilization of the tribe that they can be saved from extinction. The encroachments of civilization are beginning to be felt in East Africa; and the famous Rift Valley and the high plateaux where the fierce, bloodthirsty Masai once reigned supreme, are now becoming colonized by the white settler. It has often been proved in other parts of the globe that the native, on the advent of the white man, alters his habits or ceases to exist, and it is to be hoped that the Masai will choose the first of these alternatives.

A. C. HOLLIS.

Nairobi,
East Africa Protectorate,
May, 1905.

[1] Ol-omeni means He who is despised. When this name was given him, he was a small, sickly child, and not expected to live.